A MANUAL

OF

SERMON CONSTRUCTION

BY THE

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SECOND EDITION

INTRODUCTION

This little book is neither a treatise on Homiletics, nor an essay on the Art of Preaching.

It contains a series of practical methods, with examples, for the construction of sermons.

Both methods and examples are **elementary**. They are intended to be so.

The book is meant for the use of young Local Preachers, who have not the advantage of training nor the opportunity for much study.

A sermon should be a complete chain of clear expression, having in it truth, thought, force, and order.

The element dealt with in this Manual is mainly that of order.

Fore-words

Compact and systematic speech in correct words is comprehensible to the most illiterate, and appeals to the most simple.

. . . .

In copying others we are generally struck to an exaggerated degree by some peculiarity, which may be a merit, but is very likely to be a defect.

. . . .

The greatest merit of a teacher is to secure his own effacement.

. . . .

For effective preaching the assistance of the Holy Spirit is necessary, but that does not excuse us from trying to make ourselves and our sermons worthy instruments.

. . . .

Every sort of art must have some technique.

N.B.

Every thought is resolvable into parts ; like a ray of light, it is made up of certain constituents and the better we understand the constituents severally, the better our knowledge of the whole.

. . . .

Very often a particle or the tense of a verb is a casket of precious thought, and a preacher should cultivate a delicate appreciation for the finer shades of expression so - easily slurred by the average reader.

. . . .

The mind should be trained to select the projecting emphasis in a sentence, or the theme in a paragraph, and by some method or other harness itself to that emphasis or that theme.

It is by no means necessary, and often undesirable, that a completed sermon should have the exact form of any method. The perfection of any art is to put tools and tool-marks out of sight.

. . . .

The methods are to be regarded as helpful servants, not as arrogant masters. Their usefulness depends on the amount of personal effort and practice employed.

How to Use

Having selected your text, and sought for its real meaning by reading the context, and attending carefully to the individual words in it, you find out to which of the seven kinds of texts mentioned on the next page it belongs.

Then turn to the method or methods indicated by the figures in brackets under each division, and **write out** first in short and then in expanded form the outline of a sermon, as your mind directed by the method will dictate.

In cases where more than one method may be used for the same text (and that is nearly always the case), you must follow this process with each method suggested, and make use of the one that seems most likely to result in the best sermon.

Kinds of Texts

1. Simple sentences, or sentences containing one verb ; e.g. " God is love."
(Methods, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.)

2. Compound sentences, or sentences containing more than one verb ; e.g. "God so loved the world," etc.
(Methods, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.)

3. Complex sentences, or sentences in which there is one principal verb and one or more subordinate verbs.
(Methods, 1, 2, 3, 4.)

4. Phrases, or one or more words without a verb ; e.g. " His great love."
(Methods, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.)

5. Paragraphs; e.g. 1 John iv. 7-14.
(Methods, 1, 4, 5, 6.)

6. Subjects or topics ; e.g. " The love of God."
(Methods, 3, 4, 5, 7.)

7. Narratives, either historic or parabolic.
(Methods, 6, 7.)

Any passage, short or long, taken from either Old or New Testament, may be classified under one of these six divisions.

List of Methods

1. Analysis by lining out.

   Pages 7 and 8.

2. Analysis by questioning.

   Pages 9 and 10.

3. Extension.

   Pages 11 and 12.

4. Relation.

   Pages 13 and 14.

5. Synthesis.

   Pages 15 and 16.

6. Deduction.

   Pages 17 and 18.

7. Representation.

   Pages 19 and 20.

Analysis by Lining Out

When the text is a **simple sentence**, write each **term** on a **separate line**, under lining the most important words ; then make **the terms themselves** the themes of your sermon.

When the text is a **compound or a complex sentence**, write each **clause** on a **separate line**, underlining the principal clause and the most important words, then use the separated clauses as the outline of your sermon.

When the text is a paragraph, underline the **chief verbs** in the paragraph, and write out the sentences in which they occur on **separate lines**. Then arrange the sentences **in the order you think best for your argument**, and let them stand **in that order** as the themes of your sermon.

Whenever it is easy so to do, it may be well to state your themes in words other than those of the text itself.

Examples

I Tim. i. 15 :
1. **Christ Jesus**, i.e. Son of God and Son of Man.
2. **Came**, i.e. of His own free will.
3. **Into the world**, i.e. not on to the earth, but into the heart of the world's misery.
4. **To save sinners**, i.e. from guilt, power, and consequences of sin, etc.

. . . .

John iii. 16 :
1. **God loved the world**,
2. So that He **gave** His only-begotten Son,
3. That **whosoever** believeth in Him,
4. Might not **perish**,
5. But **have** everlasting life.

. . . .

I John iv. 7-14 :
1. God **is love**.
2. Herein **was** the love of God **manifest**.
3. We **ought also to love** one another.
4. **If we love** one another, God **abideth** in us.
5. Beloved, **let us love** one another.

Exercises : Work out in this way
Rom. i. 16 ; Luke xv. 2 ; Heb. i. 2, 3 ;
Ps. Ivi. 3, Ixiii. (underlining the verbs following

Analysis by Questioning

By this method you write out the phrase or sentence or truth you have selected as a text ; then apply to it in the **following order** the questions –

1. What?

2. How?

3. Why?

and write out the answers to these questions that your mind suggests.

If your text belongs to any other section save 1 or 2, be careful to seize either the projecting emphasis, or the complete idea, and then apply the interrogatives.

Sometimes it is useful to use other questions, such as When ? Where ? etc. ; but as a general rule it is better to adhere to the three stated above, which lead the mind into (i) the **Nature**, (2) the **History**, and (3) the **Purpose** of the object of thought.

Examples

2 Cor. v. 15 : " **He died for all,**" etc.

1. **What** does the word " **died** " mean ?
More than physical dissolution, etc.

2. **How** could He die for **all** ?
Because of what He was.

3. **Why** did **He** die for all ?
Because of the grace of God, the worth of man, and
that " they which live," etc. (ver. 15).

.   .   .   .

John xiv. 27 : " My peace I give to you."

1. **What** does Christ's peace mean ?
The peace which He possessed. Peace with God, with men,
with con science, etc.

2. **How** is Christ's peace obtained ?
It is not earned, it is received.

3. **Why** is Christ's peace necessary ?
Because without it all other possessions are unsatisfactory,
etc.

Exercises :
Work out in this way
Acts xxiv. 16 ; Matt. vii. 13 ; Gal. vi. 17.

The Method of Extension and Expansion

By this method you first **define the thought** wrapped up in a sentence or phrase, or a paragraph, etc., and then **carry it out** into as many *details* as may be necessary for your purpose ;

or,

First state your topic, and then describe its **characteristic qualities ;**

or,

Select and state clearly the truth, and then trace its (l) Source, (2) **Essentials**, (3) Effects.

In the first case your text may be regarded as a centre from which you carry out lines of thought to the circumference of life and things ; in the second, as a centre round which your thoughts are grouped ; and in the third, as a starting-point from which your thought travels first back, and then round, and then forward.

Examples

Job xxxvi. 5 : " Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any."

First discover and define the particular aspect of God's mightiness indicated, then **carry out** the thought as follows :

He despiseth not any Thing.
    "   "   "   " Creature.
    "   "   "   " Deed.
    "   "   "   " Gift.
    "   "   "   " Man, however sinful, etc.

. . . .

Topic: "The love of God."

Speak round about your subject like this –

The **Universality** of the love.
The **Eternity** of the love.
The **Freeness** of the love.
The **Individuality** of the love.
The **Working** of the love. etc.

. . . .

Exercises :
Work out in this way
Acts i. 8 ; " Faith " ; " Grace " ; " Sin " ; Matt. vi. 33.

The Method of Relation

The word " relation " has more than one shade of meaning.

In one sense it is equivalent to "the act of telling."

In another it implies "a connection perceived or imagined between things."

It is used in both senses here.

The process of the method consists in, first reciting the essential elements of the truth contained in your text, and then proceeding to bring it into relation with the separate parts of the various heads under which things seen and unseen are generally arranged.

. . . .

Such phrases as "in relation to," "there is a lesson for," etc., furnish the keys to this method.

. . . .

Samples of categories or heads are : God, Others, Self ; Body, Mind, Spirit ; Race, Nation, Class, Individual ; The questions of the day, etc.

Examples

Ex. xx. 15 :" Thou shalt not steal."

Essential elements : a commandment from God, etc.

Consider this commandment

1. In relation to the question of Capital and Labour ;

2. In relation to the question of Commercial Morality ;

3. In relation to Individual Conduct towards God and towards Man.

Luke xiii. 6-9 : The parable of the Barren Fig Tree.

1. In relation to those to whom it was spoken ;

2. In relation to the Jewish nation ;

3. In relation to modern nations ;

4. In its personal bearings.

.   .   .   .

Exercises :
Work out in this way
Matt. vii. 12; Matt, xviii. 8a ; Gal. vi. 7; 2 Cor. ix. 6.

The Method of Synthesis

The word " synthesis " denotes a process which is the exact opposite of analysis.

By analysis we separate a whole into its parts ; by synthesis we combine a number of separate parts into a whole.

There are two ways of using this method.

First : You select a **number of passages** from different parts of Scripture relating to same subject, and arrange them in the order that seems best suited to your general purpose.

Then state each passage **in words other than those used in the text**, and use **these statements** as the divisions of your sermon.

Second : You take **one** passage from Scripture, and proceed step by step with **an argument** which leads **back to your text** as its natural conclusion.

Examples

John vi. 35 : "I am the bread of life."
  " viii. 12 : " I am the light of the world."
  " x. 11 : "I am the good Shepherd."
  " xi. 25 : "I am the Resurrection," etc.

Or, Christ Jesus
1. The Sustainer,
2. The Guide,
3. The Protector,
4. The Perfecter,
      of the spiritual life.

. . . .

I Pet. ii. 21 : " Leaving us an example," etc.

1. Man must have an ideal.
2. Moral Goodness is the highest of all ideals.
3. In Jesus we have
      a. The loftiest example of moral goodness,
      b. The strongest incentive to moral goodness ;
      Therefore "Ye should follow in His steps."

. . . .

Exercises :
Work out in this way
(1 John i. 5 ; John viii. 12 ; Matt. v. 14 ;) Eccles. iii. 11;
1 Cor. i. 24 6.

The Method of Deduction

In logic the word "deduction" means that process by which from two statements we deduce a third ; but in this case it is used to denote the mental process by which from a given proposition we make other propositions out of its terms.

Two or more propositions may be selected from different parts of Scripture, and treated in the same way as one text.

Instead of harnessing the mind to the text by means of the words What ? How ? Why ? etc., you do so by means of the word " **Therefore**," and write out as many **consequences** as your mind dictates ; then, having selected those that seem **most consistent** with your text, make them the divisions of your sermon.

Examples

Rom. xiv. 7 ; " For none of us liveth to himself."

Therefore : 1. No man is an isolated unit.
Therefore : 2. Others have their share of right in what a man has and is.
Therefore : 3. Every man is in some measure indebted to others.
Therefore : 4. Every man's life should be controlled by the fact of relation.

John v. 30 : "I can of Mine own self do nothing."
John xv. 5 : " Without Me ye can do nothing."
Phil. iv. 13 : "I can do all things through Christ."

Therefore : 1. Apart from the Father, Christ Himself could not achieve good.
Therefore : 2. Without Christ, His disciples cannot achieve any good.
Therefore : 3. The power that Christ had from the Father He communicates to His disciples.

. . . .

Exercises :
Work out in the same way
John i. 2-4 ; 1 John ii. 17 ; Matt. xxiv. 35.

The Method of Representation

This method is the most **difficult** of all to *follow successfully.*

It consists in describing a scene, sketching a character, or painting a word-picture of a miracle or parable, etc., in your own words, and *requires both* **great skill and much practice.**

Having selected your narrative, no matter what *the subject*, it is necessary –

First : To imbue your mind with its spirit by patient attention to the associations, the incidents, and the essentials of the narrative.

Second : To observe three rules in your sermon : --

    a. **Omission**. Neglecting all minute and unnecessary details.

    b. **Emphasis**. Laying stress only on the points on which you wish to fix attention.

    c. **Proportion**. Taking care that the description does not occupy the time that should be given to the points.

. . . .

Work out your points with the aid of such terms as, " It illustrates," " It is a picture of," etc.

It is almost impossible to illustrate this method, save by writing practically the whole of a sermon ; but take this :

Luke xix. 1-10.

The place, the incidents, the crowd, the man seeking for Jesus.
Jesus seeking, finding, abiding with the man.

The story illustrates –

1. The lost : Zacchaeus had gone morally wrong.
    In that respect like all men.
2. Jesus seeking the lost.
    Unexpectedly, successfully, etc.
3. Jesus saving the lost :
    a. The power which saved the man, viz. : The influence of Jesus abiding with him.
    b. The method of its operation, viz. : Putting him right just where he was wrong, etc.

Exercises :
Work out in this way
Any paragraph containing a narrative of an event, a miracle, a parable, etc., in either Old or New Testament.

The **Introduction** to a sermon is meant to secure attention. It should always be short, striking, and attractive. It may be a survey of the sermon about to be preached, or it may be suggested by the **setting** of the text.

The **Conclusion** of a sermon should be a recapitulation and reinforcement of the truths considered in the sermon.

The **Application** of a sermon should be continuous. It may be **concrete** or in "**solution**," **direct** or **indirect**, but must never be **personal**.

The term " personal " means in this connection words directed against some individual in a disparaging manner.

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I found a scan of this book at:
http://www.archive.org/details/manualofsermonco00warduoft

I noticed that there wasn't a nice PDF for this book and wanted to print out a booklet for myself. I changed some of the original formatting and updated page positions due to formatting changes. I hope you enjoy.

From what I've found on the internet it looks like this book was originally published in London in the year 1900 (First Edition maybe) and in 1920 (Second Edition?).